independent claim 11. Minor formal amendments have been made to claims 3, 4, 7, 10, 12, 13, 16, and 17. No new matter has been introduced. Claims 3, 4, 7, 10-13, 16, and 17 are in the case.

The Invention

As shown in the present specification (page 3, line 24 through page 4, line 16), by adjusting a ratio of vegetable oil and animal fat in meat products to approximately 1:1 – that is, by providing meat products in a diet that contain as lipids approximately the same content of vegetable oil and animal fat – plasma-cholesterol level can be reduced effectively. Thus, as shown in Tables 6 and 7 herein, test variable #1, which contained as lipids approximately the same content of vegetable oil and animal fat lowered T-chol., F-chol., TG, and PL concentrations more than did test variables #2 and #3, which contained different lipid profiles.

As shown in the specification, the meat products of the present invention decrease total plasma-cholesterol and plasma-triglyceride levels and increase plasma-HDL-cholesterol levels in humans upon consumption of such meat products. More specifically, as described in lines 1 through 24 on page 12 of the specification, volunteers consumed a diet 110% and 120-130% higher in energy and fat then necessary for adequate daily intake. Under such conditions, total plasma-cholesterol and plasma-triglyceride levels actually decreased and plasma HDL cholesterol level increased during the test period. See Figs. 1-3. This establishes that the meat products of

the present invention effectively improve the plasma-cholesterol levels upon consumption even of excessive energy and animal fat.

Prior Art Rejections

Claims 2-4, 7, 10-13, 16, and 17 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over Giese. Claims 7, 10-12, 16, and 17 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over Bonkowski. Claims 2-4, 7, 10, and 13 stand rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bonkowski in view of Helmer et al. All of these rejections are respectfully traversed.

The novel features of the present invention, discussed above, are neither taught nor suggested by the references of record. Moreover, Applicants' findings could not be obtained based on those references by routine experimentation conducted by one of ordinary skill in the art, since none of the references teaches the substitution of vegetable oil for animal fat. Applicants respectfully urge that the rejections of record are not applicable to the claims in their present form.

Conclusion

In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Mr. Richard J. Gallagher, Registration No. 28,781 at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment

MARKED UP COPY SHOWING CLAIM AMENDMENTS:

CLAIM 2 CANCELLED

3. The meat product[s] claimed in claim 11 [2], wherein the vegetable oil is at least one oil selected from the group consisting of soybean oil, rapeseed oil, safflower oil, sesame oil, and rice-bran oil.

4. The meat product[s] claimed in claim 11 [2], wherein the lipids have a fatty-acid composition (%) comprising myristic acid, 0.5-1.5; myristoleic acid, 0 - 0.2; pentadecanoic acid, 0; palmitic acid, 13.0 - 22.0; palmitoleic acid, 1.5 - 2.5; heptadecanoic acid, 0 - 0.3; heptadecenoic acid, 0 - 0.3; stearic acid, 5.0 - 9.0; oleic acid, 24.0 - 60.0; linoleic acid, 9.0 - 45.0; linolenic acid, 0.2 - 6.0, arachidic acid, 0.1 - 1.0; icosenoic acid, 0.2 - 1.0; and arachidonic acid, 0 - 0.2.

7. The meat product[s] claimed in any one of claims 3, 4, [2 to 4] and 11, wherein the meat product[s are] is selected from the group consisting of pork sausage, Wiener sausage, Frankfurt sausage, Bologna sausage, loaves, hams, bacon, corned beef, hamburger steak, meat balls, Gyoza and Shumai meats, fresh sausages, bratwursts, ground meat, and seasoned meat.

10. The method claimed in one of claims [of claim] 12 or 13, wherein the meat products are selected from the group consisting of pork sausage, Wiener sausage, Frankfurt sausage, Bologna sausage, loaves, hams, bacon, corned beef, hamburger steak, meat balls, Gyoza and Shumai meats, fresh sausages, bratwursts, ground meat, and seasoned meat.

11. A meat [Meat] product[s] containing ~~as lipids~~ approximately the same content of vegetable oil and animal fat, said meat product comprising:

(a) a fat content of less than half of that present in conventional meat products, and

(b) 8 to 10g of soy protein isolate per 100g of meat product,

wherein the meat product[s] possesses a plasma-cholesterol-suppressing property.

12. A method for suppressing plasma-cholesterol levels in man, comprising administering a meat product [the meat products] as claimed in claim 11 to man.

13. A method for suppressing plasma-cholesterol levels in man, comprising administering a meat product [the meat products] as claimed in claim 3 [2] to man.

16. The meat product[s] claimed in [according to] claim 11, wherein the meat product is sausage, and the fat content is less than 12.4 g per 100 g of sausage.

17. The meat product[s] claimed in [according to] claim 11, wherein the meat product is hamburger steak, and the fat content is less than 7.6 g based on 100 g of hamburger steak.